



U.S. Department of Justice

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Dec 12, 2008

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Event: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Fawzi Assi

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**DEARBORN MAN SENTENCED ON CHARGES OF SUPPORTING HIZBALLAH**

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A former resident of Dearborn was sentenced today to 10 years in prison after having pleaded guilty to providing material support to Hizballah, a designated foreign terrorist organization, Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today. Mr. Berg was joined in the announcement by Andrew Arena, FBI Special Agent in Charge, and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Fawzi Assi, 47, formerly of Dearborn, Michigan, entered the guilty plea in United States District Court before Judge Gerald E. Rosen in November 2007. Mr. Assi admitted that, on July 13, 1998, he attempted to board an airplane at Detroit Metro Airport on an international flight for Lebanon. At the time he had in his possession two Boeing global positioning satellite modules. He also had night vision goggles and a thermal imaging camera in his luggage. He was attempting to deliver these items to a person in Lebanon, who was purchasing the equipment for Hizballah, which was at the time, and currently is, a designated foreign terrorist

organization.

On June 23, 2008, a hearing was held before Judge Rosen for a determination whether a sentencing enhancement, under the sentencing guidelines, should be applied to the defendant's conduct. The federal sentencing guidelines calls for a sentencing enhancement if the offense of conviction "is a felony that involved, or was intended to promote, a federal crime of terrorism." After hearing the testimony of witnesses presented by the government and defendant, as well as various exhibits, the court ruled, in a written opinion on October 17, 2008, "that Defendant's conduct was deliberately calculated to advance Hizballah's effort to influence the Israeli government through coercive military means," and that therefore the sentencing enhancement should apply."

Terrence Berg, Acting United States Attorney, said, "Providing military-application technology and equipment to a terrorist organization such as Hizballah is a serious violation of federal law that we will vigorously pursue. I applaud the excellent work of the FBI, ICE and the dedicated lawyers in our office, whose tireless work led to the successful resolution today."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Andrew G. Arena said, "This case was initiated before September 11, 2001 and I would like to thank the dedicated agents who have been a part of this case. Material support of terrorism is a very serious offense and the FBI will continue to aggressively investigate and pursue these matters."

"This case sends the undeniable message that the United States will not tolerate those who seek to provide America's technology to terrorists," said Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit ICE Office of Investigations. "The great collaborative work of the agents involved in the investigation and prosecution of Mr. Assi should be commended.." At the time of his arrest Mr. Assi had been living in Dearborn and was a mechanical engineer for the Ford Motor Company. Shortly after his arrest in 1998, Mr. Assi was ordered released from custody during a hearing in which the government sought to have him detained. He fled to Lebanon and remained there until May 2004 when he returned to the United States. He has been in custody since that time.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert P. Cares.